

Hanson Bicentennial Oral History Project – Cynthia Fish

Abby: What is your name, date of birth, place of birth and current age?

Cynthia: My name is Cynthia. I was born Howard- Cynthia Howard Fish. And I was born in Brocton. And I was born on August 31, 1947. Which means that I am presently 70 and will be 71 and August.

Abby: What is the name of your parents and siblings?

Cynthia: Oh my dear parents! I love them so much! My father was Russell Warren Howard and my mother was Eleanor Fuller and, because she met my father, Eleanor Howard was her name. Oh my dear siblings! I am the oldest of three girls. So I am Cynthia of course, and my middle sister is Jane Howard Clemens who also lives in Hanson. I also have my little baby sister, Judith Howard Godrow, and she moved away from Hanson and she is in the faraway city of Marshfield.

Abby: How long has your family lived in Hanson?

Cynthia: Now is that my immediate family or going back to like-?

Abby: You can do either.

Cynthia: Either one? So I can trace my family back to to the eighteen hundreds. My aunt did a family tree to try to find out exactly where people were born and how far- but I'm just going to say I can trace them back to the mid eighteen hundreds. That there has been a Howard or a Brown. My grandmother's maiden name was Brown and so she had quite a few siblings. My grandmother here and she's my father's mother. So that's one of the families that have been here a long time. Those are my great grandparents.

Abby: How many generations of your family have lived in Hanson?

Cynthia: Well again, going back to great great grandparents. I remember my great grandmother and I remember them. So I don't know exactly beyond then, but it goes back pretty far. They

lived on Elm Street, and if you know where Elm Street is there's a big house and my great grandmother lived down there. Then they moved to Main Street in Hanson. I guess I'll just say that. That answers the question.

Abby: If you moved to Hanson what drew you to the town; if you stayed in Hanson what's kept you here?

Cynthia: What's kept me here? I've always lived here except for six years when I got married and we moved to South Weymouth. We were living in an apartment in Tara Gardens and that's where our children were born. We lived there for six years- all nice young families, young children. The kids always had some place to play and there was a pool and they had a lot of friends. Then around 1975 we noticed that our friends started to move away. My daughter went to kindergarten in Weymouth and we lived so close to the school that they said that if we still were there when she went to first grade she would have to walk there. A little first grader was not going to walk to school so we decided to join all of our friends and look for houses. They were looking in Norwell and Scituate- more of the coastal towns. We decided to follow suit because we had made friends and we would try to find a house there too. But nothing struck me and the prices were a little hefty in Norwell and Scituate so we waited a little bit longer and this house came on the market. It was almost like this house was calling me to come back to Hanson. When I was a senior in high school, I watched this house being built. It started being built in '64 into '65. I always loved it. We looked at it and my husband told me don't make a big deal just go into the house and don't go "oo" and "ah". When I walked in the door, of course, I went "Ahhh! I love this house!" And so we put a bid on it and it was rejected and I already knew where my Christmas tree was going to go but it was rejected. We saved some more money, my parents helped me house, and the house was still on the market three months later. By that time they had

redone the pine floors in here and so we moved in, they accepted the offer obviously. We moved in in 1976. I feel like it was almost meant to be because this house I loved so much and watched being built went on the market. My family was here and so I guess that's why I decided. It was a little bit strange because I didn't think I was going to come back to Hanson. Then I was pulled back in- thankfully I was. Did I answer the question? Ok!

Abby: Did you or your family have a business in Hanson?

Cynthia: Did I have a business in Hanson? Or did my family?

Abby: Either one.

Cynthia: Well my grandfather, my father's father, he was a mechanic as my dad was and he had a little business in the back of this house. If there's a couple more questions I'll answer them and tie this in too. He has a garage which is still there, a big garage, that people would come and have their cars fixed. That pretty much was - I had a lot of people working for the town. Now, I don't know if that's another question coming up later, but my grandfather was the one who actually had the business in town. Of course, I teach piano.

Abby: What was your profession?

Cynthia: It still is my profession- I teach piano lessons. This lovely girl interviewing me, Abby Dever, was one of my students. I started back in '87 teaching piano and still am going at it. I don't have students come to my house anymore; I go to their houses. I am the organist and director up at the congregational church. That's a big part of my life too.

Abby: Where have you lived in Hanson.

Cynthia: Ok. I have lived, including this house, I have lived three different places. When I was a year old, my parents rented an apartment at the far end of Spring Street. Do you all know where Spring Street is? If you know where the MacKinnon Funeral Home is- If you go by Wyman's

you come up to that intersection where if you go straight you'd hit a house, but on the right hand side in MACKINNON Funeral Home. Right next to that is a big old house at 27 Spring Street. We lived there for one year when I was just a year old. Then, in 1949 this is a picture of me. I have a few pictures. This is a picture of me when we moved to the new house in 1949. This is little Cindy Howard. We bought a house at 239 Spring Street. I have several pictures of the house. This is an old picture of the house. It was green and white. Again 239 Spring Street. This is what it looked like. It had a beautiful front porch when we moved in. The house is still there. This picture I love. There's electrical lines running through it but this is. It looks miniscule this is the house, I know you can't see it very well, but this is the house and two enormous blue spruce that were there all during my childhood. Those were the backdrop for many family pictures I've taken. "Get in front of the tree!" And so this was taken by the fellow across the street from where we lived on Spring Street. Like I said these trees are no longer there, but that wonderful house full of memories is still there. This is the house the way it looked when we sold it. We sold the house in 2012. My mother had gone into to a nursing home. This is the house with the Rhododendrons. My father and I used to sit on the porch and we watched the cars go by. Almost until the day he went into the nursing home, Dad would always sit on this porch. This is. This is the last picture that I have of the house when it was still in our name. So that was 239 Spring Street. We lived there. I lived there until I could marry in 1968. Then we moved to the Weymouth apartment and then in '76 we moved here.

Abby: Do you know the history of your house? If so, please share.

Cynthia: Oh this house! As I said I watched it being built and that was in '64, '65. I was your age. It just appealed to me the way it was set into the hill and everything. We moved here in '76. In the '70s- you probably don't know this, but in the '70s the colors to be had were orange,

yellow, and green. Avocado green appliances or avocado green harvest gold stoves. It was just awful orange. So when we moved in you could tell this was a house from the '70s. We had orange drum and bugle core paper in our kitchen. We had orange carpeting. We have green plaid wallpaper on ceiling with floral green and orange on the walls so it looked very dark too. It was all dark stained with the orange, gold, and green wallpapers. So it took me awhile to find my decorating taste I guess. And so I tried bet four sets of curtains in every one of these windows. They didn't look right. Then I realized I didn't like curtains. The windows were really fat. Over the years I decided I liked the primitive style. I liked the old. I wanted to make this 1964, 1965 house look like it was built in the 1800s. That was my big thing. My dear husband, he would put up wallpaper and he would come home and I tore it off because I didn't like it. Over the years I've made it look old. I have a wonderful person in town, his name is Joel Clemmens, he is my sister brother in law. He has helped me put in more pine floors. He has put in old chandeliers. He has put in that checkerboard floor in the kitchen that my daughter said, "Is Joel going to make antique checkers to go on the floor?" But when she saw it in person she liked it. That's been my goal- to make this house look like an 1800s house because I love the old things. Everything I hang on the wall in this house means something. Like I have the old map of Hanson which is from an atlas from the 1879 era. Old paintings done by great great relatives way back. This is a courting mirror from the 1700s. So everything on the wall is meaningful to me. This is my great grandmother on my mother's side. It's all very- I'll just hang up a picture because I like it. Everything means something to me. That's been my goal is to make this house look into an older looking home.

Abby: Did you raise children in Hanson? If so what did you like best about raising children in Hanson?

Cynthia: Oh wonderful children! They'd be so embarrassed! These are their high school- these are actually their college pictures. This is my son, Mark Fish, and this is my daughter, Lauren Fish. They graduated from Whitman Hanson- the old Whitman Hanson- which I will talk about a little bit later. They were a little bit hesitant when we first moved here because when we lived at the apartment they could just run out and knock on their friends' doors and have a visit. We had to go get the friends and bring them in when we first moved here. But once they got into school, then they made friends. There was Cranberry Cove. They took swimming lessons at Cranberry Cove. The education they got. I really feel they got great education. They both got into wonderful colleges. Extracurricular activities. I don't think you had Mr. or Mrs. Blauss for- bless their hearts honestly. When we moved back to Hanson, Mr. Blauss was starting a play in '76. He needed some little people to be in it and so we got Mark and Lauren involved in plays. My husband and I got the bug and then we got into plays. This was such a lot of- and of course sports were popular still back then. For the education part, if they were excelling there were different places that they could do extra projects. Like there was challenge which was a program over at Stonehill. There was PCC that was offered to eighth graders. Just the closeness of all the resources and things available to them. They could hop on their bikes, it wasn't as busy at is now, but they could just pretty much everything is accessible. Now they love coming home in Hanson. They are both in California, but they love coming home to this house. Hopefully to my husband and I too!

Abby: Do you know of any stories passed down by your parents or grandparents about Hanson?

Cynthia: Alright so, I showed you this house that we lived in. This was sort of a cute little story that my dad would tell me about these enormous trees. My father grew up right next door to this house. My grandparents, Dean and Cora Howard, lived in the house next to this one. My dad

was a little guy living in that house and growing up. He remembers this house and he remembers those trees- there were two in the backyard too. There were three very straight Blue Spruces and one of them was a little crooked. My dad said that the reason that tree was crooked is that when they planted those trees, which you can imagine they were pretty little this is back in the '20s, he tripped over one. He hit it, tripped it, tripped over it and the people living in the house never straightened it out. That's why the tree is crooked- because my father tripped over it! Now you can see the size of those trees and that's just a little. I am sure that there are others stories, but that's probably what I will share because it involved my father.

Abby: Do you have any stories from your childhood about Hanson?

Cynthia: Alright this could take hours! I don't know exactly when to share everything but I road my bike all over this town. The streets were narrower. There weren't as many houses. There weren't as many cars. I would hop on my bike from the Spring Street house and go down to a library on West Washington Street. Now if you go down to the end of Spring, that's where the funeral home is, take a right on West Washington Street. Well there was a wonderful building. IS this where you would like me to get into this building? I don't know if I should wait for you. I don't know, but there was a building that was built in Hanson in 1884. This was called Thomas Hall. Thomas Hall started office life. This is a report of Thomas Hall. Since my uncle, my mother's brother, knew I liked Thomas Hall so much. My mother was an artist my uncle was an artist. He painted this picture of Thomas Hall because he knew I loved it so much. It means the world to me. So this is the building that, as a kid, I would hop on my bike and go into this beautiful hall. I loved Nancy Drew mysteries. I would go to Thomas Hall, I would pass through the door. There were two other doors on either side of the entryway. They were always closed, I didn't know exactly where they went, but I would go into Thomas Hall and there was a curved

bookcase my Nancy Drew books were on that curved bookcase. There was a big ticking clock in Thomas Hall also. A beautiful, old clock which is now at the current library in Hanson. I would get my Nancy Drew mysteries and go into this other little anteroom. The librarian was Mrs. Ruth Taylor. I was scared to death of her. She was very stern and in those days, I don't know if they do it now, you open the book and she would take her stamp and stamp when you take the book out. Then I would leave very quickly, hop on my bike, and put my books in a little basket on my bike. At the end of Spring Street there used to be a market, Hanson Public Market, there's a house there now. If you went straight down Spring Street and didn't turn left up toward where JJ's and all that corner is that was Hanson Public Market. I would always stop there and get either a popsicle or an ice cream cone. Then, again the streets were much narrower and not as much traffic, then I would hop on my bike from the Hanson Public Market and go over to a place called Hillie's. Now that place is a private home. It is right on the corner. It's sort of a long little house there, but that used to be an ice cream store and you could develop your pictures there. They sell comic books. There was just a lot of things there. I go there and buy a lot of penny candy. Then up on my bike again and head back home. This hall. I want to talk a little bit more about this hall and I don't know when you want me to do that. Then I go to Cranberry Cove, meet my friends at Cranberry Cove. Then spend, if it were the summertime, spend all the afternoon at Cranberry Cove. Take swimming lessons there in the morning. On Halloween, we go down Spring St. trick-or-treating. Some houses looked a little scary so we wouldn't go in there but again we just were independent and on our own and it was more peaceful. Then again, I would never dream of sending my kids, at that age, out on Halloween. It was just a different time and my parents had no worries because they felt it safe. So that's a few of my memories.

Abby: What is your go-to fun fact or story to tell about Hanson when you meet new people?

Cynthia: First of all I tell them its not Hanscom. Many people think its Hanscom, like where the airbase is and so, you know, they don't really mention Hanson. So they say, “ Oh that's where the airbase is,” and I say “no.” It a nice, little town and it north of Plymouth, east of Whitman and Brockton. Its very quaint. If you want to go to a nice little old fashion town, or train station, but its not Hanscom.

Abby: Do you remember a time when Henson made the news?

Cynthia: Yes I do! It was a little sad because ... I think I am going to talk about Thomas Hall now. I really want to get this in. It's a beautiful building but it was what our family did together and it will answer that question about the news. As I said in my childhood, that was the library, but I was always mystified about those doors. Like what was behind those doors? So as an adult we did a lot of plays, as I said. Joanne Ross got ahold of us with this Theatre bug and the whole family did a lot of plays. One of the places where we had our plays was Thomas Hall. And when Thomas Hall was built, and it was built in 1884, when it was built, and it was used as a library on the bottom floor. The top floor had a stage on it and a lot of plays and meetings were held on the top floor of that hall. So an adult, I would go into Thomas Hall fro play practice and those doors were open. And I could see that beyond these doors were two beautiful staircases that went up to the second floor. Now as an adult I could see what was beyond the library. So, it was a thrill for me to have the run of Thomas Hall because pretty much all it was being used for was the drama. On the top floor we would be on the stage and we would rehearse and I could envision.. And I went to where my curved bookcase was with the Nancy Drew mysteries. Of course there were no books, there might have been a few big volumes of things at the time but a lot of things had just been dumped in there. The old curtain from Indian Head School was a beautiful red velvet curtain from Indian Head School that was dumped on the floor. I worked on the set of some of

the plays that we did and I used that curtain. I cut it up and used it to make drapes for whatever plays. But to have been the run of that, because of where the drapes were near where Taylor was- the librarian who I was a little bit afraid of. I went there with much pride. I didn't have to be afraid of anything. There's a couple of things and you'll recognize this name too. I think your honors society advisor is Ms. Galambos? Does she?

Abby: The National Honors Society.

Cynthia: well she used to work for the Patriot Ledger and this is one of the articles that was in the paper because in 1991 Thomas Hall burned under very suspicious circumstances. Here's a picture of it burning. It just breaks my heart. Ellen, Ms. Galambos, lived right next door to Thomas Hall. So she has some strong feelings about. She interviewed people when Thomas Hall burned. See if this sounds familiar. One of the people she interviewed, "One woman remembers being mesmerized as a child by the ticking of the stately old grandfather clock that stood in the hallway. She slipped past the silent wooden doors on either side of the entrance, but way too shy to ask what lay beyond. And she would run for the circular bookcase holding her Nancy Drew mysteries. Now as an adult she talks about the thrill she felt and finally opened the doors and ventured up the staircase for the first time. I was still in awe of the old building as an adult remembering my childhood thoughts. Maybe if more people were this in awe as adults it wouldn't have had this miserable ending." So can you guess who that was?

Abby: You?

Cynthia: It was I! Again, this is what I remember making the news when this building, in 1991, came to a very, very sad end. It was under suspicious circumstances, but I still have a couple of things from that building. One is a picture of a play, my first play at Thomas Hall which was Agatha Christie's "Mousetrap". I don't know if you've ever read Agatha Christie's "Mousetrap".

Wonderful play. This would be me in my younger days and, let me see, Mr. Blauss is right here. Ms. Galambos' mother is right here. The same people would be in the same plays all the time. They were different plays. It was just a wonderful way. Our children were in it. This is the stage at Thomas Hall. Now, when we were rehearsing this play, one of the people that was also in the play was up on a ladder and he said, "Do you know the ceiling is a false ceiling? It's not the original ceiling." He peeled away one corner of the ceiling and he said, "Did you know that chandeliers and sconces up here with beautiful glass globes. He said, "Do you want one?" So this little glass globe is a little memory that I cherish from Thomas Hall. This was on scone hanging on the wall. He said there were so many of these same little globes hanging from chandeliers. It's all handmade, all etched. This is from Thomas Hall. I think that when it burned think about all these that were lost in the fire. People will sort of kid me, my name being Cindy, the story of Cinderella. Cinderella had a glass slipper that was left behind. I have my glass globe that is just, again, a little memory of Thomas Hall. Thomas Hall is this area that sort of bridges the gap between my childhood life in Hanson, getting to go there and getting my books, and as an adult with my family really having the run of the place. I could really just go over the whole place where as a child I was taught just do your thing, get your book, and don't ask too many questions. But I made up for lost time when I could explore that building as an adult. I loved it. I loved that building. I think that's why my uncle painted the picture- because he knew how much it meant to me. It's just a great part of our family life- the theater and, for me, the building. I'm sorry I probably went on way too long!

Abby: Did you ever find out what happened?

Cynthia: There's things that have gone on. The fire marshall did say that the blaze was suspicious. I'm not going to point any fingers but it was a suspicious fire. This was one of the

articles, "Thomas Hall Blaze Was Set Fire Marshal Office Finds". There was a lot of controversy in the town about keeping this building up. This is what I'm hoping that after I am gone historical places in town will be preserved. This is sadly, I know you probably can't see them, but these are all the piles. The building was knocked down very quickly after it was deemed unsafe so they knocked the building down into a big pile of rubble. These are just pictures of the piles of rubble that was Thomas Hall. Very sad. I'll share one other story I just through of. I had a Chevette. It was an '81 Chevette, maroon and beige. It was known around town a little bit. In fact it was in a camera shop called C and J Camera which was where one end of Shaw's is now. She had a picture show, an art show, where you could put different photographs into this show at the Old Thomas Mill. I put- this is me it became a rather- I kept it for ages- but this is me sitting on my '81 Chevette. I entered this into the art photograph show at the Old Mill. The girl who ran C and J Camera said she had so many people who said, "I know that car ! I know that car!" because it was very unusual the two tone Chevette. She said quite a few people didn't know who I was but recognized the car. This was a show.

Abby: Is there a certain tradition or event in Hanson that you cherish?

Cynthia: I would say the Memorial Day parade. I marched in it, my children marched in it. That's something that I always go to now. Then I walk through the cemetery. Of course my parents have passed away, but I remember being with my dad and he would water the flowers on the Howard grave site. My father had a wonderful sense of humor. He planted the Geraniums and then he would go water them on Memorial Day. If one Geranium wasn't blooming, if it was over his father's grave, he would say "Ok, Pa. You've got to work a little bit harder. You're not trying hard enough to make this Geranium grow." So the Memorial Day parade and then I love the Christmas Eve candlelight service at our church, the First Congregational Church in Hanson.

Again, I've been at that church since I was in third grade. I worked myself up from pianist, assistant organist, and now I am choir director at the church which is a very important part of my life, my faith. The candlelight service is a very special part of who I am. Those two things are pretty important to me.

Abby: What activities and events brought the community together on a regular basis?

Cynthia: Probably, as it does today, town meetings, the parades, anything to do with the youth. If you had kids in baseball or soccer or plays in the schools. Anything like that brought the community together. I'll never forget, this isn't- thank goodness- something that happens on a regular basis, but after 9/11 the town hall green had a ceremony where we all came together and that place was packed. We had candles. There was- all those people there were almost silent. BUt we were all feeling that shook of what in the world is going on and being there as s town, being together, it was very moving. So that was one of the things, I know it's not a regular event but it was a time in my life when I've never seen anything like it. Everybody just wanted to be together.

Abby: What was it like going to school in Hanson? What schools did you attend?

Cynthia: It was a lot different. I attended the Washington Street School and I attended the Indian Head School. The Washington Street school is a mess! I don't know if you've seen the dilapidated old building up on Washington Street. If you go to the Intersection where JJ's was and take a left that's East Washington Street. There's an old building on the left hand side. It's sort of the twin to Elsley Thomas School. Do you know the Elsley Thomas School? Elsley Thomas has been very well taken care of. It's apartments now. That was mostly for the South Hanson kids. The West Washington Street School, or the Washington Street School, was for the North Hanson kids and was considered the North Hanson School. It's pretty dilapidated now and

empty but that school was my first, second, third in the building. Then my best year elementary school they had a little portable. Have you ever seen the historical society on the grounds of the Elsley Thomas School? It was a duplicate or something similar to that one that was on the right hand side of the Washington Street School. That was my fourth grade classroom all by ourselves out there. I don't think it was as old as the one at Elsley that's used as a historical society building. I think it came to be after World War II and was placed there. It had two doors and the girls would be lined up at one and the boys would be lined up at the other. It was really neat to think you had your own little place in there. Then Indian Head, which was the only other school besides the Elsley and Washington Street, that's where I went for fifth through eighth grade. There were only three buses for the whole town of Hanson. We had three buses: A, B, and C. I was the B bus. I was on the B bus. Three school buses to accommodate every child in Hanson. I don't know how many buses there are now, but I know there's more than three that they ride in now. Then Whitman Hanson. Is this where I answer about Whitman Hanson too? Ok. Whitman Hanson was- I started Whitman Hanson in 1961. My father grew up in Hanson but he went to the old Whitman High School. This is his diploma. Russell Warren Howard. Class of 1936. Town of Whitman. He went here and signed by there were different people one I recognize as Charles Bailey who the auditorium at the new high school was named after him. This is, I don't know what happened to the front, but this is the important part. This ring that I wear all the time is my father's graduation ring from high school. After my father passed away my mother said go upstairs and if there's anything upstairs in Dad's dresser that you would like it's yours. I never saw him wear this, but I opened some draw and saw this ring. I put it on this finger and that's where it's been. He did graduate from Whitman Hanson High- Whitman High School. Then they decided because between the 1960s and the 1980s Hanson was growing by leaps and bounds and

so they needed a new school. They decided to build the new, my new, Whitman Hanson High School. I was a Girl Scout back then and I took pictures. I don't have them but I know they are probably down cellar. But I took pictures of my high school that was built in the '50s. I took pictures of it being built. This is my Girl Scout sash. This photography badge right there was for my taking pictures of the high school before your high school was built. I got that. Now, here's my next- be prepared- The old high school, my high school, got a little bit frayed around the edges. And so in 2005 they started what you two girls are now enjoying. But they did have to tore down my high school to get it there. This is my yearbook. This is the yearbook that I had called the Interom. This is me, I was secretary of my class and so we planted a tree. This is me and the adviser and president of our class as we planted a cherry tree in the front of the school where that was, or that was our class gift, we planted a tree. So when it was decided to tear down my high school, I wanted to take pictures of it being torn down just like I had pictures of it being built. I got so much pushback from people who were guarding the driveway up the high school, with my camera asking "can I please this time, can I please?" And finally on my third try there was a young man. I said, "I took pictures of this school being built and now they are tearing it down. Do you think I could go and take pictures. I'm a nostalgic old woman and I would really like to get up closer. He said go ahead. So off I went, tickled. So I took pictures and again you can't really see them from where you are but these are pictures of the high school as is was being taken down. I think the one that strikes me the most is, look at this, that's coming down. I don't know if you remember what it looked like but this picture is, the entrance to school. I was standing at the entrance and the hall you could see where the hall went down. It was just all concrete and it was just all out with the sky. So I did take pictures of it and I wrote a paper, an article. I don't know if we have time. Do we have time ? But when I get moved, I write. I have to

express myself in writing. And so if you indulge me, I would like to read a little article I wrote for the newspaper about the tearing down of my high school. And here it is :

It really does surprise me how much I am affected by the tearing down of the past, the destruction of the old high school. We still have the building, we still have the memories, but it's just not the same. The pictures of the destruction, just as I took pictures of the construction back when I was in 8th grade. Lifelong friendships began in that building. A romance began in that building with a little Whitman boy of the class of 1963. The Whitman boys met the girls on the other end of the gym making palm tree leaves as I yelled to my classmates from the other end of the gym to use chicken winter and paper to roll palm tree trunks. At the same time, others were wheeling in a paper mache volcano Made by students in the industrial arts class. The title of our prom was "belly hard?" You see we were decorating our gym for our junior prom. And a prom at a fancy place was not an option in those days. That volcano stayed there for quite a while in the gym. It was quite the conversation piece. And there were the sad times. The times where I do remember where I was. I was on the second floor of the school on French class with my teacher, Mr. Kelly, and the Spanish teacher came running in from the hall. "The presidents been shot," she cried. I'll never forget the look of shock, of disbelief in Mr. Kelly's face. I remember the eerie quite that followed. Up until that moment, the date, November 2, 1963, only meant one thing. Our Junior class was holding our Junior formal in the cafeteria . We had decorated it during study hall and it looked beautiful. That day we tore it all down. It's true I will always have these memories. And I'm not naive enough to think that the old school was still a place for students to thrive and enjoy the best of the best. Visiting the school with our daughter Lauren, class of '88 and son Mark class of '90, with students there I could see the inadequacies of the building. The auditorium with those uncomfortable, wooden seats, the small libraries and those

deplorable portables. But I could still “see” what it use to be. It was built for me so that I could have a wonderful educational experience surrounded by all the new stuff. It hurts to drive down Franklin Street and see less and less of it. It just hurts. At one time it did look beautiful but in the summer of 2005 you tore it all down.

So as you are accumulating your memories, I certainly have my own of my beautiful school. So does that, answer your question ?

Abby: Did you go to school before or after the combination of Whitman and Hanson schools ? How do you feel about the combination?

Cynthia : I went after and I’m thrilled because it have the two towns of Whitman and Hanson a chance to be together. And of course I met my husband at the high school, a Whitman boy and you married three years after I graduated. I agree with them combining the two schools, the two towns.

Abby: What would you say are Hanson’s defining characteristics? In other words, what makes Hanson, Hanson?

Cynthia: I think it still has a town hall feel. Small town feel. You didn’t want it to go over 10,000 people, it’s hard to stay and I know it’s over that now but I still feel it has a small town feel. I love our natural resources, our ponds. Again all the things that are right here and again I hope they will be preserved. It does. It still does have a small town feel to it. And it’s historic buildings There are so Many historic buildings. I don’t want them to end up like Thomas hall or

like my Washington school, I just hope that someone taken an interest in the buildings. If they start to decay and just takes charge of things to keep going.

Abby: Do you know any local legends? For instance such as Kiwani ?

Cynthia : Does it have to be a person? Yes? I'm gonna tell my uncle. My uncle, who's name was Arthur Howard, my father's brother. He actually was a very very good baseball player. He would play in the all the fields in Hanson when he was a kid, and his nickname was Whitey. Everybody called him Whitey Howard, he has very blonde hair. He graduated from the high school in 1949. He was drafted by the Braves which was a minor team at the time. Boston Braves. He was, I guess double A or triple A and he was being asked to move up to the majors. But there was a dispute in his contract and he has fallen in love with my aunt and a lot of things contributed to the fact when he decided you know what I'm done with all this baseball, I think I'm just gonna let it go. And the person that took my uncles spot on the roster was Hank Aaron. I don't know if you're a baseball fan but If you are you'd recognize him. So I always feel like my uncle have Hank his shot. So I'm gonna call my uncle a legend. And at his funeral, as we were all leaving they played, Take me out to a ball game, on a trumpet. It was amazing. But I'll collect and say that he was quite the legend. If not to everybody, to me.

Abby: What's your favorite place in Hanson and why ?

Cynthia: I have two. I love my home. I love being here. I'm just a homebody. But I must say, I love driving to Wampatuck pond, which is the pond behind Town Hall, in the fall. You don't have to go to New Hampshire to get that foliage. Drive up to the parking lot and look out on the horizon. The reflection of those beautiful fall colors on Wampatuck pond is stunning. So I always make it a point to go there at the height of foliage season and see that scenery right here in my own back yard.

Abby: How has Hanson changed throughout your life ?

Cynthia: I think I've mentioned it a couple times but there's more people. There's more cars, there's less woods. There was no Brentwood, there was no drive-in. That was all woods. Where Shaw's is now, that was all woods. There was a little shack where Shaw's is now in the middle. An old man had a lawn mower repair shop in there. And that's all that was. It was just all woods. There have been more houses built, the streets are wider, they use to be a lot narrower. Now they are a lot wider. And you don't see as many kids on bikes, that was just such a part of my childhood. Just meeting up with your friends on bikes. You just don't see that anymore. The essence of it, I feel like the essence of it is still a small town. And a lot of good comes out of Hanson.

Abby: That's it!

Cynthia: I'm giving a nod to my relatives who were prominent. Please tell me if I'm going over but I did a little digging because I wanted you to know a little bit about my relatives who were very much Hanson Serving. And my Aunt, who was Whitey Howard's sister, my father's middle sibling. He was the oldest, then there was Margery Bates, she worked in the assessor's office for years and years. I think she started in 1958 as an assistant assessor and then she retired in the 80's. She worked tirelessly for the town. She was also a Girl Scout leader. So she was very much involved in her town. She graduated from high school in 1937. So that was one of our town servants. My sister Jane Clemons, my middle sister, she taught at Maquan school from 1973 to 1981. She was a teacher in town for quite a few years. My great grandfather, this is my great grandfather, my father's father. No actually he was not my father's father, he was my father's grandfather. This is my great grandfather. Warren T. Howard. And he served as town clerk in Hanson from 1935 to 1949, he died in office. He was also on the public school committee,

library committee, town collector. Under his picture says, “ A true and faithful public servant.” And I was hoping to have his sign. My father had it and donated it to the Historical Society. He lived on Maine Street and instead of people going to the Town office to get different licenses, he has his office in his own home on Maine Street. And they would go to his house and I think the sign was hanging outside of his house. That goes back a few generations it feel like. And then there was Bob Brown, who was the highway survair, he was a cousin. My grandmother’s maiden name was Brown. There was just a lot of people on my paternal side, my mother was from Bridgewater, but on my father’s side there was a lot of Hansonites. Hanson meant a lot to them, they not only lived here but they worked for the town. I’m very proud of my heritage and although my children don’t live here- I’ve read somewhere that if you love a place you always take a little bit of it with you wherever you go and you always leave a little bit of it behind. Hanson will always be my hometown. Hanson will always be your hometown. Whitman will always be your hometown. You will always carry a piece of that hometown with you and no matter where you go you will leave a little bit of you behind too. Even with what we are doing today. Whatever happens to this interview, it will be in archive for future generations to see. So I think I’ve covered everything, there’s probably more I’ve missed but I really appreciate being asked to be apart of this project.

Abby: Thank you for agreeing to this.

Cynthia: Oh, you’re welcome! I just wish you all the best, I do! The best in your next step.

Thank you for being right here with me and making me feel very at ease.